

The UK Kidney Association: stronger together

Ellen Castle, Communications Officer for the British Renal Society, and Caitlin Sewell, Marketing and Communications Officer for the Renal Association, provide an update on the new UK Kidney Association

■ British Renal Society ■ Renal Association ■ merger ■ kidney care

The UK Kidney Association (UKKA) is a new organisation created to support the whole multi-professional team in the delivery of kidney care, education and research, all of which enable people to live well with kidney disease. It will be formed by a merger of the British Renal Society (BRS) and the Renal Association (RA), together, as a single new organisation.

This new organisation brings together, into one membership organisation, the 70-year history of the RA, including the professional and national delivery and the statutory data collection, analysis, research and reporting of the UK Renal Registry, with the multi-professional focus of the BRS and the knowledge, experience and research of the affiliates and Special Interest Groups (SIGs). The result will be an organisation that can support the entire UK renal community and improve lives by supporting all professionals in the delivery of kidney care, research and quality improvement.

Details of the UKKA are shown in *Figure 1*.

Figure 1. What is the UK Kidney Association?	
Who	The Renal Association (RA) and the British Renal Society (BRS)
What	A new organisation bringing together the RA and BRS to better support the whole of the professional UK kidney community
When	A formal transition will begin at the end of March 2021, with an official launch taking place in June 2021
Where	The organisation will serve all four home nations of the UK. While the RA headquarters in Bristol will serve as the main base, virtual channels and remote working will facilitate engagement, communication and collaboration across the multi-professional renal team
Why	Closer working as a single, national organisation will achieve a 'stronger together' outcome. It will enhance communication and multi-professional influence on national service transformation, and support delivery of professional development, clinical research and quality improvement. The UK Kidney Association is committed to greater involvement of patients. It will also realise economic efficiencies of scale through a single Secretariat.

Forming the UK Kidney Association

Following 2 years of engagement and discussions between the RA and the BRS, an overwhelming majority of the renal community has supported this merger to form the UKKA. The transition reflects the evolving needs of the wider community and the centrality of multi-professional working in kidney care, enabling better support to all kidney professionals.

The association will comprise of professional groups, the UK Renal

Registry and other core committees and structures. The UKKA is focused on delivery through a series of multi-professional SIGs that are supported and enabled through core UKKA corporate structures. A high-level overview of the proposed structure of the UKKA is shown in *Figure 2*.

Together, the RA and BRS are creating a dynamic, representative, democratic membership organisation that is fit for purpose for the next 20 years and beyond to serve the needs of a dedicated and innovative kidney constituency.

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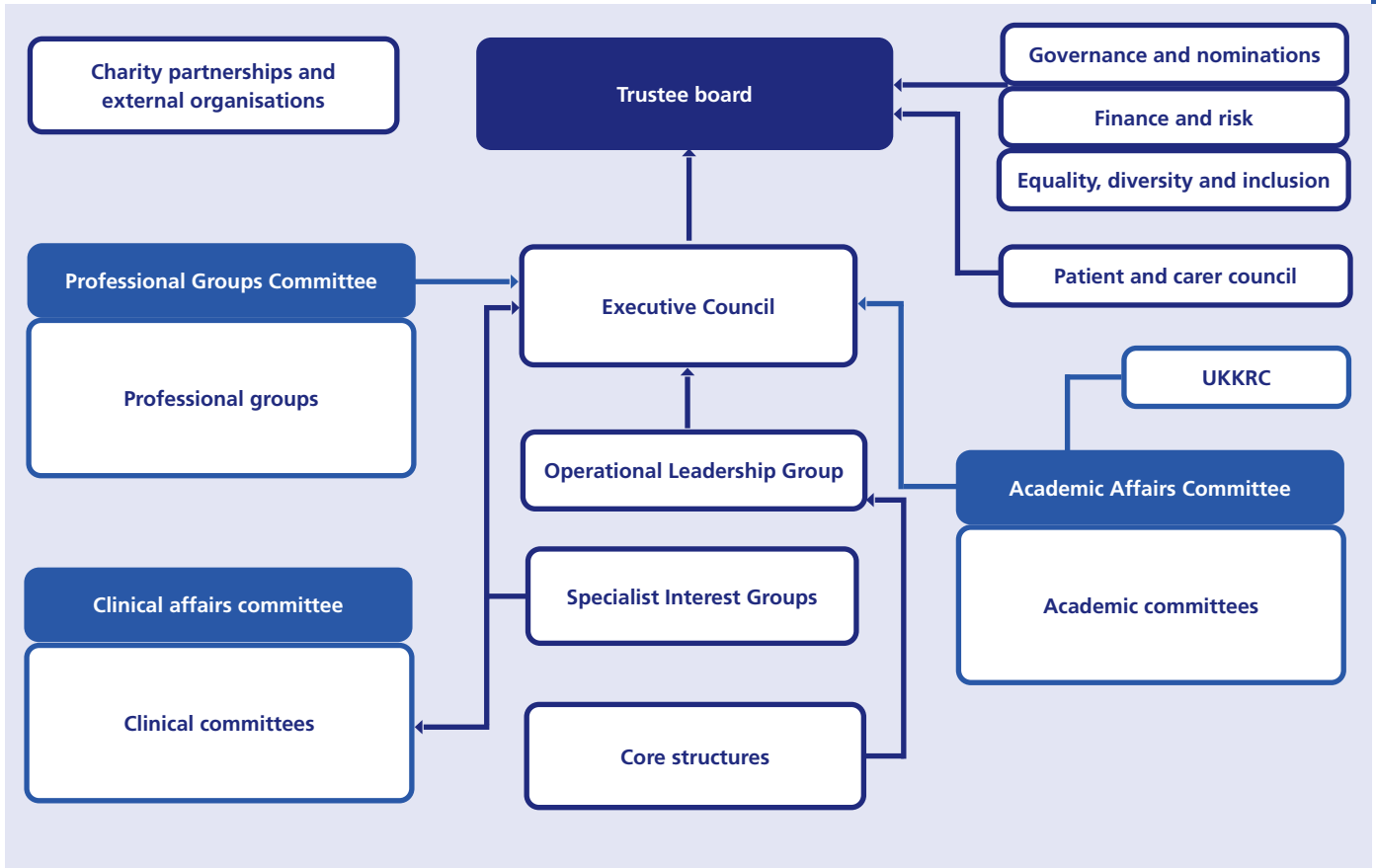


Figure 2. Proposed structure of the UK Kidney Association

Benefits

Many recent achievements have come through joint initiatives, including the joint UK Kidney Conference (UK Kidney Week), the Kidney Quality Improvement Initiative (KQuIP), patient safety, patient information and comprehensive COVID-19 support. There are major benefits for members, including economies of scale, opportunities for workforce modernisation and coordination to be realised and creation of high achieving SIGs in major areas of practice. These will work closely with the current structures, including guidelines, patient safety, quality improvement and research. These examples highlight the strength of working together.

Working closely together, the UKKA will deliver a robust, focused and highly integrated approach for the entire multi-professional renal team. This will facilitate greater support for professional development and education for all members. There is also potential for greater involvement in the multi-professional team in guidelines development.

As a merged association, the UKKA will have greater influence across England and the devolved nations on healthcare commissioning, clinical and laboratory research and industry collaborations. The association is committed to developing external renal charity stakeholder partnerships.

It is our hope that the UKKA will provide opportunities for increased impact and influence around the issues that affect kidney care at a national, regional and local level.

Next steps

The next steps in progressing from two organisations to the UKKA involve merging the organisations, appointing and electing candidates for the new roles and applying the agreed heads of terms. While there have been challenges in regard to keeping to timelines given the current pandemic, we expect to have the first annual general meeting for the UKKA in summer 2021. **JKC**